

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 17266 01 OF 02 160327Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4579

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 17266

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - INFO ADDRESSEES ADDED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, CH

SUBJ: SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS: PAKITSA'S VIEWS

1. SUMMARY: I PAID MY OFFICIAL COURTESY CALL YERSTERDAY AFTERNOON ON MIKHAIL KAPITSA, CHIEF OF THE MFA'S FIRST FAR EASTERN DEPARTMENT. KAPITSA, AS ALWAYS, WAS CORDIAL AND EXPANSIVE. THE MAIN POINTS HE MADE WERE: (1) THAT THE CHINESE ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE WAS A "MEANINGLESS GESTURE" AND THAT THE SOVIETS WILL SOON REPLY TO IT AUTHORITATIVELY; (2) THAT THE CHINESE DO NOT REALLY WANT A BORDER AGREE-
MENT, BUT MERELY WISH TO CONTINUE TALKING; (3) THAT RELATIONS ARE NOT LIKELY TO IMPROVE AT LEAST UNTIL THE SECOND GENERATION OF SUCCESSORS, TEN YEARS OR SO EHNC; AND (4) THAT THE SOVIET PEOPLE ARE STILL UPSET ABOUT THE HELICOPTER CREW, AND THE GOVERNMENT MAY BE "FORCED" TO TAKE SOME ACTION. "WHEN ONE DEALS WITH A BEAST, ONE MUST UNDERSTAND THE METHODS OF THE BEAST." END SUMMARY

2. KAPITSA SAID EMPHATICALLY THAT THE CHINESE ANNIVER-
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 17266 01 OF 02 160327Z

SARY MESSAGE WAS "A MEANINGLESS GESTURE." HE SAID THAT

FROM THE PRESS STORIES HE HAD SEEN, ONLY THE STAE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY HAD READ IT CORRECTLY. THERE WERE TWO POINTS TO THE CHINESE MESSAGE, HE SAID. THE FIRST WAS TO PUBLICIZE THEIR POSITION. THE SOVIETS HAVE REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO THEIR PROPOSALS, BUT THE CHINESE HAD BEEN SILENT. NOW THEY HAVE FILLED THE CACUUM BY RE-STATING THEIR OLD POSITION. IT'S THE SAME POSITION WHICH DREW THE TWO SIDES INTO DEADLOCK FIVE YEARS AGO. "WE ARE READY TO GO FOREARD TO SETTLE THE BRODER QUESTIONS, BUT THEY ARE NOT." THE ACTUAL DISPUTED TERRITORY COVERS ABOUT 35,000 SQ. KILOMETERS. THE LARGEST CHUNK OF DISPUTED TERRITORY, SAID KAPITSA, IS IN THE PAMIRS, ABOUT 14,000 SQ. KILOMETERS. THE OTHER PARTS ARE AROUND KHABAROVSK AND ON THE AMUR AND USSURI RIVERS. THE CHINESE SAY WE SHOULD DISCUSS THIS TERRITORY, KAPITSA ASSERTED, AND SHOULD WITHDRAW ALL SOVIET FORCES IN THE MEANTIME. THEIR AIM IS TO TAKE OVER ALL THE DISPUTED TERRITORY FIRST, AND THEN DISCUSS A "SETTLEMENT." WHEN CHOU EN-LAI MET WITH KOSYGIN IN 1969, HE SAID THAT THE TWO SIDES SHOULD NEGOTIATE A TREATY BASED ON THE EXISTING VOUNDARY. THE PEOPLE LIVING ON EITHER SIDE SHOULD NOT BE DISTURBED. BUT WHEN THE TALKS BEGAN, THE CHINESE PORPOSED AN INTERIM TREATY, TO BE FOLLOWED BY FURTHER DISCUSSIONS TO SETTLE ADDITIONAL POINTS. THIS WOULD GIVE THEM THE CHANCE TO RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OLD TREATIES. THE SOVIET SIDE HAS LONG BEEN READY TO FIX THE BOUNDARY ON THE RIVERS ALONG THE "THALWEG," THEREBY HANDING OVER 430 ISLANDS TO THE CHINESE, INCLUDING DAMANSKY ISLAND. BUT THE CHINESE ARE NOT READY TO ACCEPT THE OTHER PARTS OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL. IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION ON ANY NEW SOVIET INITIATIVES OR UL'ICHEV'S RETURN TO PEKING, KAPITSA SAID THAT IL'ICHEV MIGHT GO BACK TO FIND OUT IF THE CHINESE HAVE ANYTHING NEW TO SAY. IF NOT, HE WOULD COME BACK TO MOSCOW. ON TIMING, HOWEVER, KAPITSA SAID THAT THERE ARE NO PLANS TO SEND IL'ICHEV BACK TO PEKING "SOON". HE WENT ON TO ASSERT THAT THE CHINESE DO NOT WANT AN AGREEMENT NOW, ONLY NEGOTIATIONS. A SETTLEMENT WOULD COMPLICATE THEIR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICIES. THEY MIGHT BE WILLING, AT SOME POINT, TO BRING RELATIONS WITH THE USSR BACK TO LEVEL OF THOSE WITH THE U.S., WEST

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 17266 01 OF 02 160327Z

GERMANY OR JPANA. BUT NOW THE SOVIET "THREAT" IS A CONVENIENT DEVICE FOR MAINTAINING INTERNAL CONTROL. IT'S AN AGE-OLD CHINESE POKICY TO USE AN EXTERNAL FOE TO STRENGTHEN INTERNAL UNITY. PEKING MAY ALSO HAVE HOPED THAT OUTSIDERS WOULD HELP TO PAY TO SUPPORT CHINA'S ANTI-SOVIETISM. THIS HAS WORKED ELSEWHERE, BUT THE CHINESE HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTED. THEY WILL NEED A "FOREIGN DEVIL" FOR SOME TIME.

3. THE SECOND OBJECTIVE OF THE CHINESE ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE, SAID KAPITSA WAS TO CREATE MISINFORMATION ON THE EVE OF THE VLADIVOSTOK MEETING, DURING THE CSCE, AND IN PREPARATION FOR THE OPENING OF THE JAPAN-CHINA TALKS ON A PEACE TREATY. WE'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THEIR MESSAGE," SAID KAPITSA, "TOMORROW OR THE NEXT DAY IN THE PRESS, AND PERHAPS IN A SPEECH." KAPITSA WENT ON TO NOTE THAT THE CHINESE HAD NOT PUBLISHED THE MESSAGE FOR THEIR OWN PEOPLE. THEY ARE AFRAID, HE ASSERTED, THAT MANY CHINESE PEOPLE WOULD SEE IT FOR THE HOLLOW GESTURE THAT IT IS. I ASKED WHY THE SOVIET PRESS HAD NOT CARRIED THE FULL TEXT, TO WHICH KAPITSA, SHOWING HIS ONLY DISCOMFORT OF THE CONVERSATION, SAID, "WE DO NOT WANT OUR PEOPLE TO BE HOOKED BY SUCH PROPAGANDA." IN ANY CASE, HE SAID, IT WILL BE ANSWERED FULLY.

4. ON CHINESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS, KAPITSA SAID THAT MAO KNOWS THAT HE IS DYING, SO HE IS TRYING TO FIND SUCCESSORS WHO ARE LOYAL TO HIM PERSONALLY AND POLITICALLY. HE DISMISSED OR KILLED THOSE WHO WERE CLOSEST TO HIM IN THE PAST. CHOU EN-LAI COULD NOT BE HIS SUCCESSOR, EVEN IF HE WERE IN BETTER HEALTH, BECAUSE HE KNOWS MAO TOO WELL. HE COULD BE THE ONE TO THROW MAO OUT OF THE "MAO-SEULUM." SO MAO IS TRYING TO FORM A NEW GROUP COMPRISED OF THE SHANGHAI LEADERS (INCLUDING CHIANG CHING) AND TWO OR THREE GENERALS (CHEN HSI-LIEN, HUA KUO-FENG). THE SHANGHAI GROUP HAS NO PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND SIMPLY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ADMINISTER THE COUNTRY. CHINA FACES THREE LONG-TERM PROBLEMS WHICH ANY SUCCESSORS WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH: FIRST, AGRICULTURE; SECOND, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; AND THIRD, CHINA'S STANDING IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD. MAO WANTS HIS WIFE TO BE THE SUCCESSOR
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 17266 01 OF 02 160327Z

AND THE OTHERS WILL PROBABLY SUPPORT HER TEMPORARILY. BUT SUCH A CONGLOMERATION WILL NEVER WORK AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER WILL GO ON. THE MILITARY WILL NEVER TAKE ORDERS FROM "THAT BOY" WANG HUNG-WEN. ("AFTER ALL," HE SAID TO ME WITH SOMEWHAT SURPRISING CANDOR, "YOU KNOW WHAT THE SUCCESSION WAS LIKE IN THIS COUNTRY.") HOWEVER, SAID KAPITSA, WE DO NOT EXAGGERATE THIS STRUGGLE. CHINA WILL REMAIN A UNIFIED NATION AND A RELATIVELY STRONG ONE. BUT WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP THE STRUGGLE WILL BE INTENSE. THE QUESTION WILL PROBABLY NOT BE SETTLED FOR TEN YEARS OR SO WHEN THE NEXT GENERATION OF SUCCESSORS MOVES UP.

5. I ASKED WHETHER MOSCOW WAS NOT WORRIED THAT ANTI-SOVIET SENTIMENT HAD BECOME INGRAINED IN THE MINDS OF MANY CHINESE. KAPITSA SAID IT IS TRUE THAT MAO HAS

TRIED TO POISON THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE. FOR EXAMPLE,
MAO TOLD PAKISTANI PRESIDENT YAHYA KHAN THAT HE HAD CAUSED
THE DAMANSKY INCIDENT IN ORDER TO MAKE THE PEOPLE HATE

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 17266 02 OF 02 141853Z

42

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 17266

EXDIS

THE SOVIETS. THE CHINESE WILL SEEK TO EXPLOIT AND BUILD
UP THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST
COUNTRIES. THEIR TACTICS ARE LIKE THOSE OF THE MONKEY
WHO SITS ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN WATCHING TWO TIGERS
FIGHT BELOW. THIS WAS CLEARLY REVEALED IN A STATEMENT
BY MAO IN 1966, REVEALED IN RED GUARD DOCUMENTS. MAO SAID
THAT WORLD REVOLUTION, UNDER CHINESE DOMINATION, WAS HIS
OBJECTIVE. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS, "SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM"
AND "IMPERIALISM" MUST BE PUSHED INTO FIGHTING EACH OTHER.
THEN AFTER SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM IS DESTROYED, THE BAYONETS
WILL TURN ON THE IMPERIALISTS, WHO WILL BE EXHAUSTED BY
THE PREVIOUS STRUGGLE.

6. THE THIRD GENERATION OF CHINESE LEADERS (I.E., THE
SUCCESSORS TO THE SUCCESSORS) MAY DECIDE THAT THE COST
OF CONTINUING HOSTILITY WITH THE SOVIET UNION IS TOO HIGH.
THIS COST, KAPITSA EXPLAINED, DOES NOT REFER TO THE
ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF LARGER TRADE, BUT TO THE COST OF
DIRECTING RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN A PROTRACTED STRUGGLE.
THIS MAY TAKE TWENTY YEAR OR SO. BUT WE CAN WAIT, SAID
KAPITSA. "WE OPPOSE PRAGMATISM IN THEORY, BUT WE ARE
PRAGMATISTS." EVENTUALLY SOME DETENTE MAY EMERGE;
RELATIONS COULD GET BACK TO THE LEVEL OF SOVIET-U.S. OR
EVEN SOVIET-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS, BUT NO MORE. "SOCIALISM
IS A STRONG IDEA, BUT NATIONALISM IS STRONGER."

7. BEFORE LONG, CONTINUED KAPITSA, THE CHINESE WILL
TURN ON THE U.S. THEIR ATTITUDE IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE,
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 17266 02 OF 02 141853Z

THEY OPPOSE DETENTE, THEY HAVE NO POSITIVE POLICY. THE
LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE COULD BE TH FIRST AREA OF
MAJOR CONFRONTATION. THE CHINESE PRESS FOR ACCEPTANCE
OF THE 200MILE LIMIT AND THE CONTROL OF STRAITS BY THE
BORDERING STATES. THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO BLOCK OFF THE
WHOLE WESTERN PACIFIC BY EXTENDING THEIR LINE OUT FROM
THEIR MOST DISTANT ISLANDS. THEN THE WHOLE AREA WILL BE
EITHER THEIR TERRITORIAL SEAS OR STRAITS UNDER THEIR
SHARED CONTROL.

8. TO MY QUESTION ABOUT THE HELICOPTER AND ITS CREW.
KAPITSA REPLIED THAT IF THE CHINESE REALLY WISHED TO MAKE
A SYMBOLIC GESTURE, THEY COULD RELEASE THE CREW. BUT THEY
HAVE NOT. "POEPL E OFTEN ASK ME," SAID KAPITSA, "WHY
WE DON' DO SOMETHING TO GET THE CREW BACK." THE
CHINESE OBJECTIVE, HE WENT ON, SEEMS TO BE TO RAISE SUCH
QUESTIONS IN SOVIET MINDS, "TO MAKE US SEEM HELPLESS."
THE CREW WAS SEEN IN SINKIANG SHORTLY AFTER THE INCIDENT,
BUT NOT SINCE THEN. THE CHINESE REJECTED AN APPEAL
THROUGH THE RED CROSS AND HAVE RETURNED ALL LETTERS
SENT TO THE CREW. KAPITSA SAID IF NOTHING HAPPENS ON
RELEASE OF THE CREW, THEN THE SOVIETS WOULD BE COMPELLED
TO RETALIATE. HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC ON WHAT FORM THIS
WOULD TAKE, BUT SAID THERE WERE VARIOUS ACTIONS WHICH
COULD BE TAKEN. "WHEN ONE DEALS WITH A BEAST, ONE MUST
UNDERSTAND THE METHODS OF THE BEAST. WE TOLD THE CHINESE
THIS, AND THEY BECAME VERY CAUTIOUS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO
INCIDENTS ON THE BORDER THIS YEAR."
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